

Australian Capital Territory

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) (Minimum Service Standards—Taxi Network) Approval 2006 (No 1)

Disallowable instrument DI2006–21

made under the

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Regulation 2002, section 18B (Minimum service standards for regulated services)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 18B(1) of the *Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Regulation 2002* (the Regulation) requires the Road Transport Authority (the Authority) to approve minimum service standards for the operation of a regulated service including a taxi network. An approval under section 18B(1) is a disallowable instrument by virtue of section 18B(4).

Schedule 1 of the Instrument sets out the minimum requirements that must be consistently maintained by a Taxi Network.

The Minimum Service Standards (MSS) incorporate, at Part 6, the ‘repealed standards’ applying to taxi networks under section 244 of the Regulation. Under section 244(2), the repealed standards cease to be in force on commencement of this instrument. The MSS also include service standards for taxi networks that were previously administratively determined and provided the framework within which a network developed proposed service standards under section 6A of the Regulation.

Part 1 Minimum Service Standard for the Making, Management and Auditing of Records and Systems to be Kept under the Act

A taxi network provides the Authority with statistical data on taxi booking waiting times and telephone waiting times. Under Part 1, the network is required to have the data and the statistical reports audited by an independent auditor each year. The auditor’s report must be submitted to the Authority within two months of the end of each financial year.

Part 2 Minimum Service Standard for the Operation of a Taxi Network

Part 2 sets out the requirements for the operation of a taxi network including:

- giving taxi drivers and operators the network's accepted service standards (ie the particular standards the network, on application for accreditation, agreed to implement),
- providing network services only to accredited taxi operators and appropriately licensed drivers,
- equitably treating affiliated taxi operators, affiliated taxi drivers, and customers,
- behaving honestly toward other taxi networks, and
- publishing a customer service charter.

Part 3 Minimum Service Standard for the Training of Taxi Drivers

Part 3 requires a network to train taxi drivers in the used of the networks' equipment and provide the Authority with a copy of any in-house training program.

Part 4 Minimum Service Standard for the Monitoring of the Safety of Taxi Drivers

Part 4 requires a network to do all that it can to provide a safe workplace for taxi drivers including inspecting vehicles, monitoring alarm systems and adhering to the approved Security Camera Standards.

Part 5 Minimum Service Standard for the Operation of a Taxi Booking Services

Part 5 requires a network to:

- provide a booking system 24 hours a day, seven days a week,
- have arrangements in place for the repair and maintenance of network booking equipment so that taxis have continuous access to and from the network and faults can be responded to within one hour,
- if agreed by the customer, off-load a hiring to another network if the hiring is not accepted by a taxi driver affiliated with the first network within 5 minutes,
- maintain records of zones used in the dispatch of hirings.

Part 5 also applies performance standards to taxi networks in relation to telephone waiting times for both connecting to the booking service and then being connected to an operator or automated computer system. At least 80% of calls are to be connected to the booking service within 20 seconds. At least 70% of calls are to be connected to an operator or automated system (such as a voice recognition system) within one minute and at least 90% of calls are to be connected within two minutes. These requirements are based on similar standards adopted in Western Australia.

A taxi network must provide the Authority with statistical reports indicating its actual performance against these standards.

Part 6 Minimum Service Standard for Maximum Waiting Times Performance Standards

Part 6 provides the performance standards for maximum waiting times. These standards have been applied to ACT taxi networks for almost 10 years. Four measures are used, two for peak periods and two for all other times.

The peak period measures are:

85% of hirings to have a maximum waiting time of no more than 18 minutes;
95% of hirings to have a maximum waiting time of no more than 30 minutes.

The 'all other times' measures are:

85% of hirings to have a maximum waiting time of no more than 10 minutes;
95% of hirings to have a maximum waiting time of no more than 20 minutes.

Waiting times for hirings involving a wheelchair in a WAT are to be measured and reported separately.

A taxi network providing services for wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs) is required, by the end of December 2007, to provide an equivalent level of service, as measured in waiting times, for hirings made for people in wheelchairs as for all other hirings. This standard is established in the Transport Standards under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)*. One new waiting time standard is introduced. The network is required to record average waiting times in the various districts of Canberra and Canberra overall. The average waiting time for any one district is to be no more than 15 minutes longer than the Canberra average waiting time.

A taxi network must provide the Authority with statistical reports, in the format approved by the Authority, indicating its actual performance against these standards.

Part 7 Minimum Service Standard for Services for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis

Part 7 establishes the standards applicable to a network that provides services for WATs. The network must micro-manage bookings for people in wheelchairs including:

- accommodating situations where a WAT driver, having accepted a standard hiring, is then required to transport a person in a wheelchair;

- advising the Authority if a WAT driver refuses to accept a hiring involving a wheelchair;
- providing a dedicated WAT manager from 7.00am to 7.00pm on weekdays and a dedicated WAT phone number;
- pre-allocating wheelchair hirings to WATs at the start of every day;
- providing a two-way radio system for communications between WATs and the WAT manager;
- meeting requests for a preferred driver wherever possible; and
- keeping a register of regular WAT client contact details and special requirements.

These requirements reflect a range of recommendations by the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Reference Group accepted by the Government in October 2005.

Part 8 Minimum Service Standard for How Contraventions of the Road Transport Legislation by Taxi Drivers will be Handled

Part 8 requires a taxi network to establish a disciplinary program for drivers reported as not complying with the Road Transport Legislation or the network's rules. The program should include:

- the investigation of complaints;
- an appeals process;
- an escalation process possibly including graded penalties and suspension from the network;
- the establishment of processes for identifying, and referring to the Authority, very serious disciplinary matters.

Particular processes are to be established for WAT drivers who do not give priority to wheelchair hirings or avoid wheelchair hirings by turning off the dispatch system.

Part 9 Minimum Service Standard for Processing of ACT Tax Subsidy Scheme Vouchers

Part 9 requires a taxi network to establish procedures for processing Tax Subsidy Scheme (TSS) vouchers and train staff in accordance with the procedures and TSS rules. TSS records are to be auditable and the network is to assist operators and drivers in completing and processing TSS vouchers in accordance with TSS rules.

Part 10 Minimum Service Standard for Customer Inquiries and Complaints

Part 10 sets out the requirements for a taxi network for handling customer complaints and inquiries. All complaints are to be recorded and responded to. There is to be a process for reporting complaints to management and all relevant staff are to be trained in complaints and resolution processes.

Performance standards for handling complaints have been set including that 90% of complaints are to be substantially acted on within 14 days.

If the Authority forwards a complaint to the network, the network must respond to the Authority within seven days.

These requirements reflect recommendations by the Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Reference Group, accepted by the Government in October 2005, about networks' complaints handling processes.

Part 11 Minimum Service Standard for the Handling of Lost Property

Part 11 sets out the requirements for handling lost property. Lost property must be handled in accordance with the network's lost property procedures and stored in a secure place. The network must be able to receive lost property seven days a week and provide continuous public notification about the lost property service.

Part 12 Minimum Service Standard for Adequate Number of Taxis to Operate the Service

Part 12 requires a taxi network to report to the Authority any period longer than two hours when it considers insufficient taxis were operating. The network is also required to ensure an adequate number of taxis with baby capsules are available.